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*The "Field of Abram" in the Geographical List of Sheshonk I.*—By JAMES HENRY BREASTED. The University of Chicago.

IN a recent fascicle of this journal Professor M. G. Kyle has discussed the above geographical name in the great list accompanying the large historical relief of Sheshonk I at Karnak. Professor Kyle concludes that the identification of the second portion of the name as Abram "scarcely comes within the bounds of possibility." It is important for Old Testament scholars to know whether this conclusion is well grounded or not.

In the first place Professor Kyle is in doubt as to the accuracy of the text which I used in making the identification. He refers to my discussion of the matter in my *Ancient Records of Egypt* (IV, pp. 352—353), where I have clearly indicated that I had photographs of the text (*ibid.*, p. 348, note a). It seems not to be known to Professor Kyle that I first published this identification in 1904 in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages* in an article entitled "The Earliest Occurrence of the Name of Abram" (*AJSL.*, Vol. xxi, pp. 22—36).<sup>1</sup> I there (p. 35) included a perfectly clear photograph of the name, in which not a doubtful sign occurs. Moreover the same photograph was later inserted in my *History of Egypt* (p. 530) in connection with a mention of the identification, and this passage, mentioning the identification and referring to the photograph, is particularly referred to by Professor Kyle with page

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<sup>1</sup> Even if I attached any consequence to questions of priority in such matters, I would not raise the question with my good friend Spiegelberg who published the same identification the same year. We did so in entire independence. Moreover as I stated (in *AJSL.* xxi, p. 36, n. 24). Erman's papers show that he had noticed it in 1888, but did not publish it, and my friend Schaefer had also noticed it independently. It is of importance to remember in this discussion, that *four scholars have made this identification independently.*

reference. I do not understand how it could have been read without noticing the reference to the photograph in the text, and also to the earlier article in the *American Journal of Semitic Languages* appended in a footnote. In any case there is no reason for uncertainty as to the text which I used, nor the slightest basis for calling it in question.

This term "The Field of Abram" contains three words and although the second and third are Asiatic words foreign to the Egyptian scribe, he has prefixed the Egyptian article "P". To this Professor Kyle objects that it is impossible that the Egyptian scribe should have translated the foreign article into Egyptian, even granting that it was prefixed to a geographical name. I quite agree with him. This unsatisfactory assumption is however not necessary.<sup>1</sup> The first noun in this compound is, as is now commonly recognized the Semitic word חֵקֶל "field", which occurs eight times in this geographical list, showing that it was a current element in the geographical names of Palestine at this time. Nothing is commoner throughout the foreign world at the present day than for some such native geographical term to be used without translation. In the East we constantly say "the tell of A," "the wadi of B," "the ghor of C," and when we were in the cataracts of Nubia we frequently spoke of "the bab of so and so," meaning one of the natural gates in the rock barriers of the cataracts which the natives call a "bab." In the same way חֵקֶל "field" was a current geographical designation in Palestine, but not itself a proper name. The Egyptian took it up and spoke of "the hekel of this" and "the hekel of that," using the Egyptian article before it. This continued into New Testament times in Palestine. Compare Ἀκελδαμάχ "Field of Blood" or "Field of Sleep." That this is the case is shown conclusively by the parallel use of the well-known Semitic word מְנַח "valley," which also occurs in this list with the Egyptian article "P" before it. Just as *we* say "the Wadi Tumilât," prefixing the English article to the Arabic word "wadi," so the Egyptian said "P<sup>e</sup>-hekel of —," and "P<sup>e</sup>-emeḳ of —," meaning "the field of —" and "the valley of —".

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<sup>1</sup> I accepted it formerly (*AJSL*. xxi, p. 32, n. 11), but I have had more experience in the East since then, and the above explanation seems to me conclusive.

Professor Kyle also objects to the interpretation of חקל as forming a compound with the following word. The existence of such compounds in the list is proven by the example in which עמק is the first member, or compounds with שפלה "stream" and נגב "south country," examples so conclusive that it is fruitless to discuss the question. Moreover Professor Kyle's own proposed explanation (for which, by the way, no demonstration is offered), viz. that this first member means "vicinity," "neighborhood" or "community" demands connection with a second identifying word as much as does the word "field"; or are we to suppose that the Egyptian scribe eight times recorded the name "community" in this list, as the name of eight different towns in Palestine!

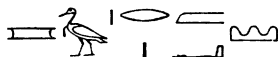
As to the transliteration of the word Kyle is mistaken in stating that I "change the final vowel to u," with the implication that this is done in violation of the text. In writing foreign words, and later also in writing words for which he had inherited no current or generally prevalent orthography, the Egyptian scribe usually employed for each consonant a syllabic sign containing two consonants, of which however he read only the first, the second being a very weak consonant, corresponding to Semitic ' , ı or ʕ. Many if not all of the letters of his alphabet had grown up in this way. Thus 𐀀 the old writing for *t*', "a loaf of bread," became the letter "*t*"; 𐀁 the slope leading to the high desert plateau, as its archaic forms show, the writing for *k*' "high," is the letter "*k*"; 𐀂 = *r*' "mouth" is the letter "*r*".<sup>1</sup> There was nothing new to the scribe therefore in this acrophonetic system which he employed for writing foreign names. We call it "syllabic writing," but it has been widely misunderstood and various futile efforts have been made to interpret the weak second consonant of each sign as a vowel. In view of what Sethe has brought out in his "*Verbum*" and Burchardt's recent study of the foreign words (see below), it is safe to say that such modern efforts have been conclusively shown to be unsuccessful. The Egyptian scribe wrote our word *hkl* thus:



<sup>1</sup> See Sethe, *Das ägyptische Verbum*, I, §§ 73—76, 138—141, 195—201 for a full treatment of such phenomena.

We may slavishly transliterate this: *P<sup>h</sup>-hw-k-rw<sup>ʿ</sup>*, but (disregarding *p<sup>ʿ</sup>*, the Egyptian article), the reading intended by the Egyptian scribe was *h-k-r(=l)*. The weak *w* in *rw*, which is the correct reading of the lion is the occasion of Kyle's remark that I have "changed the vowel," though of course there are no vowels in the text.<sup>1</sup>

Turning now to the more important final word of the group, which three others beside myself have independently identified as "Abram," we find it written as follows:



This is to be transliterated thus *'-b'-r'-m* and read *'brm* = אברם. Kyle first objects to the reading of the first sign , as *'* or *ʿ*, because in the writing of ordinary, that is non-foreign words this sign has the value *mr*. Against the reading *ʿ* he quotes Brugsch who once read it *mr*, though noting that Brugsch also read it *ʿ*. For these two different readings by Brugsch there is of course a reason, for it was Brugsch himself who discovered and demonstrated the reading *ʿ* for  in the "syllabic writing." The reading *mr* which Kyle finds in Brugsch's *Geographische Inschriften* belongs to 1857—1880, when this work of Brugsch appeared. Years later he discovered the proper reading of the sign and published it in the *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache* in 1874 (pp. 142—143). He clearly proves the new reading *ʿ*, and refers to the old reading *mr* as an "Irrtum . . . . den sämtliche Aegyptologen mich selbst nicht ausgeschlossen, begangen haben in Bezug auf die Lesung des Zeichens  in bestimmten Wörterverbindungen." Egyptology is among the sciences which are making rapid progress and Brugsch's old reading of over fifty years ago was one which he himself consigned to the populous limbo of incorrect and obsolete readings. Kyle also quotes the English edition of Erman's *Aegyptische Grammatik* as throwing doubt on the reading of  as *ʿ*. That edition represents a state of knowledge nearly twenty years old; it is entirely out of date and although I translated it myself, I have reason to hope that it will ere long be superseded by an English edition based on the *third* German edition, now in press. But even in the

<sup>1</sup> On the weak *i'* by which the scribe writes *'* at the end, see my note, *Records*, vol. iv, pp. 352—353, note f.

second German edition of 1903 the reading of  as *iw* (= **š**) in "syllabic writing," is inserted without question (p. 217). Moreover, as I know from my notes of Erman's lectures twenty years ago he never questioned Brugsch's reading **š** for  in "syllabic writing." His interrogation point in the first edition of his grammar has nothing to do with its use as **š**, but refers to something quite different. The value **š** which the sign  has in a large number of foreign words, is due to the fact that there arose a confusion in the usage of the Egyptian scribe between the sign  (*iw*) and  (*mr*), which in the lapidary style are very much alike.  and  in "syllabic writing" strictly equal *iw*, or disregarding the weak second consonant it is used for *i*, and this constantly corresponds both in genuine Egyptian words and in the writing of Palestinian words to the Semitic **š**. All the numerous examples will now be found collected in Burchardt's recent and careful compilation of foreign words transliterated in Egyptian hieroglyphics<sup>1</sup> and it would be superfluous to repeat any of them here.

Not only was the reading **š** demonstrated by Brugsch thirty six years ago, but we may go further and show that the reading *mr* in our word is impossible. In the "syllabic writing" the consonants *m* + *r* cannot be indicated by *one sign*! If the scribe finds the consonants *m* + *r* in a foreign word which he is transliterating, he renders them *invariably* by a syllabic sign or signs for each consonant, thus: for *m*:  *m*',  *my*,  *my*,  *my*,  *my* (or  *e*),  *my*,  *my*; for *r*:  *r*',  *yr* (?), or  *rw* (rarely ). Anyone at all incredulous on this point can satisfy himself of the fact in Burchardt's convenient list,<sup>2</sup> though the fact has been common property among Egyptologists for twenty years. The reading *mr* for  in our word is absolutely impossible.

Finally Professor Kyle objects to the reading of  as *m* and affirms that the second sign, the arm, is entirely ignored in the transliteration "Abram," and further that "the arm is

<sup>1</sup> *Die altkanaanäischen Fremdworte und Eigennamen im Aegyptischen* von Max Burchardt, Leipzig 1909—1910.

<sup>2</sup> See especially §§ 56—60 and 77—83.

a strong vowel letter which ought not without special reasons to be ignored in the transliteration." As a matter of fact



or  with the  is the usual writing for *m* in the "syllabic writing"; and even in Erman's grammar of twenty years ago, in the treatment of the alphabet (§ 35), the meaningless  with initial *m* in *Egyptian* words is duly noted. Its frequent use throughout the "syllabic writing" in the initial, medial or final position is a commonplace of modern knowledge.

It will be seen that none of the objections offered by Prof. Kyle cause any difficulty. I may refer to another interpretation of the name which has occurred to me since first publishing it in 1904. The consonants אברם might be the plural of אביר, and "The Field of Stallions" or "Bulls" would give excellent sense. It lacks however the preciseness which we expect in such a defining genitive, a preciseness which is only obtained by the use of a proper name after such a common word as "field." This is one of the objections also to the interpretation suggested by Maspero years ago, viz. that "brm" is אבלים\* "meadows." To this we may also object that in Hebrew אכל occurs only in compounds with a following noun in the genitive, and that *the plural is never found*. I am therefore still inclined to see in the word the earliest occurrence of the name Abram.